

pay the ultimate price; they commit the ultimate acts of heroism, so that we might be safe, secure, and free.

All of us Americans owe these two Minnesotans, Major Robert L. Olson and Sergeant Thomas E. Barber, and their fellow soldiers a debt which we can never repay. We owe their families and friends our lifelong gratitude, support, and assistance for the burdens they must now bear on all our behalf. And we can only stand in awe and admiration as we witness such courage, such heroism, and such devotion as the men and women who serve their great country with their abilities and who protect it with their lives.

LITHUANIA'S NATIONAL DAY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Friday, February 16th is Lithuania's National Day marking the day in 1918 when the Lithuanian National Assembly declared independence after World War I.

But Lithuania was not "new" in 1918; it simply took its place among modern, democratic nation-states after an ancient history of a distinct culture and people. The Baltic peoples settled in the Baltic region during the second millennium BC, and the Medieval Lithuanian empire stretched for a time from the Baltic to Balkans and lasted hundreds of years.

But February 16th carried a special meaning for Lithuanians during the dark days of Soviet occupation. Lithuanians carried their hopes and dreams for freedom, democracy, and independence in their hearts and marked that special day silently or risked persecution by the KGB. Woe to those who showed the Lithuanian flag or celebrated on February 16th. They risked being hauled off to jail or into exile.

On March 1, 1990, Lithuania reasserted its independence from the domination of the Soviet Union. Lithuania led the way for other Soviet Republics to throw off the yoke of Soviet Communist imperialism, resulting in the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

This declaration was not without cost. In January 1991, Soviet paratroopers stormed the Press House in Vilnius, injuring four people. Barricades were set up in front of the Lithuanian Parliament, the Seimas. On January 13, 1991, Soviet forces attacked the television station and tower in Vilnius, killing 14 Lithuanians. One woman was killed when she tried to block a Soviet armored personnel carrier. Five hundred people were injured during these attacks. Just last month, Lithuanians commemorated the tenth anniversary of those tragic events.

But these courageous Lithuanians did not suffer and die in vain. Lithuania has now become a vibrant democracy. It has established a free-market economy and the rule of law. Lithuania wants to be fully integrated into Europe, and is seeking membership in

the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The United States always refused to recognize the Soviet domination of the Baltic states. The U.S. position was that it would only recognize a free and independent Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. What we celebrate this year is what we must help preserve next year and the year after that. We must carry on that principle today by being sure that Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are admitted into NATO as an unequivocal statement that we will never again tolerate domination of the Baltic states.

I support admitting the Baltic states into NATO and I hope my colleagues here in the Senate will support their entry also in the next round of NATO expansion.

That debate we will save for another day, but I am sure all my colleagues can agree on the importance of Lithuania's contribution to freedom and independence for the former Soviet Republics and will join me in congratulating Lithuania on its National Day.

I am honored that my mother was born in the tiny Lithuanian village of Jurbarkas many years ago; that she came to this country proud of her heritage, but determined to be an American citizen. My late brother, Bill, and I visited Lithuania a few years ago and found that we have cousins in Jurbarkas that we had not known we had. For our family, the Iron Curtain literally cut off the Lithuanian branch from their American cousins. This Senator, the son of that proud Lithuanian mother, now serves in this great body and takes pride in being able to rise and salute the Lithuanian people on their independence.

MINNESOTA CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, This month in Minnesota and across the country we celebrate "Black History Month"—a time when our nation rightfully recognizes the many and varied achievements of African Americans and the positive contributions they have made to American society and to our way of life.

In 1926, Carter Woodson—considered by many to be the "Father of Black History"—created Negro History Week, which became Black History Week in the early 1970s. In 1976, February was chosen to be Black History Month, because it included the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, both of whom made heroic contributions to the lives of African Americans in this country.

Today, Americans of all races recognize Black History Month as an important way to celebrate the achievements of African-Americans in Minnesota and the United States.

However, today, and throughout our history as we honor this commemora-

tion, we must also remember that we have a long way to go to ensure full and equal rights, opportunities, and benefits for all Americans.

We must be bolder in our efforts to ensure that all Americans—of every race—have the opportunity to share in—and contribute to—our economic prosperity. That means a quality education, adequate housing and health care for all Americans. And it means that our tax and budget policies must spread their benefits across all social and economic lines.

We must renew our commitments to ensure that all American—of every race—can fully share in—and contribute to—our economic prosperity. That means quality education, housing, and health care for all Americans. It means a good job with living wages, so that everyone can earn the American dream. And it means our tax and budget policies must spread their benefits across all social and economic lines.

We must increase our efforts to ensure that our justice system is color blind when it comes to enacting and enforcing our laws. Racial profiling, hate crimes, prejudice, and discrimination must be eliminated now and forever.

Ever since a Minneapolis Mayor named Hubert Humphrey challenged the consensus of the Democratic Party on civil rights in 1948, the women and men who have lead and shaped my party have made tremendous contributions to achieving these national goals. But this work is yet unfinished, and it is now, during Black History Month, that all members of this new Congress and our new President must rededicate ourselves to these causes.

I voted against confirmation of our new Attorney General, John Ashcroft, because I did not think he was adequately committed to upholding our nation's long and hard-fought tradition—forged by Democrats and Republicans alike—on civil rights. Now that he has been confirmed, however, I hope he will demonstrate through his actions that he truly is interested in justice for all Americans, regardless of race.

I intend to hold him to the promises he made during his confirmation process that he will not repeat his past actions that demonstrated a racial insensitivity which not only divided many communities, but also the work of this Senate.

The Bush Administration's recent announcement that it will appoint an African American as Attorney General Ashcroft's top deputy is a good start to healing some of these rifts, but we must see action.

Minnesota takes great pride in the African Americans who have made our state and our country a better place to live, work, and recreate. Their contributions to the arts, business, politics and culture are numerous.

Starting back in the Civil War, Black Minnesotans were involved in important undertakings that contributed to the good of the nation. In 1860, although there were only 259 residents of African descent in the state, 104 Black men served in the Union army. Despite being paid less and suffering from racial prejudice, they fought courageously along with their white brethren.

Minnesotans also played important roles in more recent civil rights advances. The U.S. Postal Service recently honored St. Paul native Roy Wilkins as the 24th American honored in the Black Heritage Commemorative Stamp Series. As a leader of the NAACP when this country made significant civil rights advances, his legacy is felt today across this country.

Alan Page was first known to most of us as an all-pro Hall of Fame lineman for the Minnesota Vikings. However, Alan has often said he takes more pride in his subsequent career as a Special Assistant Attorney General and an Associate Justice on the Minnesota Supreme Court.

Nellie Stone Johnson has had a long and distinguished record of public service in support of the advancement of minority concerns, the rights of workers, and equal opportunities for all people. Her life is chronicled with a series of "firsts." As a leader of organized labor in the 1930s and 1940s, she was the first woman vice president of the Minnesota Culinary Council and the first woman vice president of Local 665 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union. She was also the first African American elected to citywide office in Minneapolis when she won a seat on the Library Board in 1945.

Sharon Sayles-Belton, another of Minnesota's greatest mayors, has for almost eight years led initiatives to make our state's largest city a better place to live, work, do business and educate our children.

And Billy McGee, a Public Defender who passed away last year, was a tireless champion of civil and human rights in the Twin Cities community. Everyone knew that they could call Billy at all hours and be assured of his help.

Minnesota native Dave Winfield and World Series hero Kirby Puckett were both voted into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame last year. Not only are they great athletes, they are greatly respected and enormously contributing civic leaders.

And William Finney is the distinguished Chief of Police of our capitol city, St. Paul. He has successfully integrated that police force, combatted crime afflicting citizens of all races and nationalities, and helped lead the way for racial and social advances in his city.

Those are just a few of the Minnesotans who have and continue to set ex-

amples for the rest of us. There are many more women and men who are giving their very best to improve our state. As we celebrate Black History Month, we can all do well to look to their examples of activism and excellence. And we can strive to follow their leadership in making this country all that it should be for all our citizens.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING CHASKA POLICE OFFICERS BRADY JUELL AND MIKE KLEBER

• Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I rise today to honor two Minnesota heroes.

Chaska police officers Brady Juell and Mike Kleber saved the lives of more than a dozen residents as fire burned through an apartment building.

On the morning of Tuesday February 6, 2001 a fire broke out in an apartment building in Chaska, Minnesota. With little regard for their own safety, Officers Juell and Kleber searched and found resident after resident. In some instances they literally pulled people to safety.

Officers Juell and Kleber did their job. But they did so much more; they inspired us because they showed how great and how selfless we can be.

The community will be honoring these brave men on March 3, but I wanted the Senate today to recognize these good and noble men who saved lives and provided us a glimpse of who we can be as a people.

I ask that the following articles from the Minneapolis Star Tribune and the Chaska Herald be printed in the RECORD.

[From the Minneapolis Star Tribune, Feb. 7, 2001]

POLICE OFFICERS SAVE PEOPLE FROM BURNING CHASKA APARTMENT

(By Chris Graves)

As he lay choking on smoke and unable to see, Brad Bandas saw the glimmer of a flashlight through the sooty black smoke filling his Chaska apartment building.

The 22-year-old man hoped that whoever was on the other side of the light saw his hand frantically waving.

Out of the smoke came a hand. Then Bandas was on his feet. Then he was outside, standing—and coughing—in the crisp, pre-dawn air.

"The officer just clutched my hand and pulled me out and gave me the boost I needed," Bandas said. "I could have been dead. Smoke kills you."

He was one of more than a dozen apartment residents saved by Chaska police officers Brady Juell and Mike Kleber as fire lapped up the side of the three-story stucco building in the 600 block of Ravoux Rd. about 4 a.m. Tuesday.

One resident, Robert A. Ebert, 38, died in the blaze after he broke out his garden-level apartment window to try to escape.

Chaska Police Chief Scott Knight said a bystander tried to pull Ebert out of his burning apartment, but he fell backward and died in the blaze.

Knight said preliminary findings indicate the fire, which started in Ebert's apartment, was caused by an electrical malfunction and was an accident.

Knight beamed like a father about his officers' actions.

"They are heroes. I know we would have many more deaths," he said, "with the people sleeping and the rapid spread of fire and smoke."

Bandas had made it down to a first floor hall before collapsing. His fiancée, Jackie Gallipo, 19, watched from their third-floor apartment as he was pulled out of the building. The officers, as well as Bandas, were yelling at her to jump. The officers assured her they would catch her.

And they did.

"I climbed out the window and was hanging off the sill. I didn't want to jump," she said. "But I didn't want to burn up . . . so I jumped."

Knight said the two officers crawled through the smoke, banged on apartment doors and yelled to awaken residents. Several times, the two men used their shoulders to break down doors.

"They reluctantly accept the title 'hero,'" Knight said. "They said they were doing nothing short of what their peers would have done. But I have to tell you, they are heroes. 'I'm beaming with pride.'"

[From the Chaska (MN) Herald, Feb. 7, 2001]
ONE DEAD IN FIRE; POLICE HELP SAVE OTHERS

(By Mark W. Olson)

Dave Cooper's first migraine in six months kept him awake early Tuesday morning. He was flipping from channel to channel when he heard glass breaking. Cooper looked out his Creekside Apartment window at the other Creekside Apartment building across the parking lot. Flames were shooting from a sub-level apartment of the three-story complex, at 625 Ravoux Road, and windows had shattered from the heat, Cooper said.

Cooper called 911, ran outside and into the west entrance of the blazing building and began pounding on doors. His girlfriend, Donna Busch, ran to the east side of the building and began yelling at residents from outside the apartment. By the time Cooper reached the second floor, the building was filled with smoke, he said.

Chaska Police Officers Brady Juell and Mike Kleber arrived about a minute after receiving the 3:54 a.m. call.

The fire began in Robert Andrew Ebert's sub-level apartment. He had apparently broken the bedroom window of his flame-filled apartment to escape and another resident had tried to reach for him, said Chaska Police Chief Scott Knight. By the time police officers arrived, flames six to 10 feet high were coming out of Ebert's apartment windows. Ebert, 38, died in the fire.

Ebert was the only occupant in the apartment. Knight said Ebert had a son, who did not live with him, and relatives in Watertown and Waconia.

The fire may have been "electrical in nature," according to Knight. Preliminary investigations by the State Fire Marshal point to it starting in Ebert's living room in the vicinity of the VCR and television. There is a continuing investigation into the exact cause.

The apartment building could be a complete loss, Knight said. There were 21 occupants in the building, according to apartment manager Brad Bandas. Residents suffered from smoke inhalation and one occupant sprained an ankle, Knight said.

Knight credited officers Juell and Kleber with saving many lives during the fire. "I